Using Evidence to Improve Refugee Resettlement

A monitoring and evaluation road map

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Executive Summary

There has been a huge flurry of activity around refugee resettlement over the last five years, with many countries launching resettlement programmes for the first time or scaling up existing efforts. Within the European Union, resettlement has become a bona fide priority and, with a New Pact on Migration and Asylum on the horizon, it could take on even more importance. In addition, the move by the United States—the biggest resettlement player until 2018—to drastically reduce its refugee admissions has left other countries in the lead in global efforts to address displacement. But to ensure the sustainability of both old and new resettlement programmes, it is essential for policymakers and programme designers to take stock of lessons learnt and be able to demonstrate the merits of their activities and design choices.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is the missing link. Many countries' resettlement systems do not have a strong M&E culture, but developing one can help policymakers and programme designers assess a programme's potential to fulfil its strategic and operational objectives. It can also improve understanding of obstacles—both what they are and how to overcome them—and lead to better outcomes for refugees and communities in countries of resettlement and first asylum. More broadly, M&E can support resettlement systems in three key ways:

It is essential for policymakers and programme designers to take stock of lessons learnt and be able to demonstrate the merits of their activities and design choices.

- **Tracking progress on objectives.** M&E systems provide evidence of the degree to which a country's objectives for its resettlement programme are being obtained, and whether observed changes (e.g., improved integration among resettled refugees) can be attributed to the effectiveness of programme policies and practices. There is broad consensus among resettlement actors that providing humanitarian protection to those in need is the primary objective of such programmes. As such, the most widely used metric of success is the number of refugees resettled. But other objectives—whether implicit or explicit—rely on assumptions that may be untested, such as the view presented by some European policymakers that resettlement can be used to deter irregular arrivals or to strengthen the protection space for refugees who remain in first-asylum countries. An M&E framework lays bare assumptions about how resettlement activities are supposed to deliver the expected results, allowing researchers to test their accuracy.

- **Supporting continuous learning and improvement.** Resettlement states are constantly looking to improve their programmes. An M&E framework can help track lessons learnt more systematically, producing higher quality evidence that is collected consistently over time. It also allows authorities to adjust programmes where there are opportunities to do better or at the earliest signs of distress. For example, as more countries establish predeparture orientation programmes to prepare refugees for travel and life after resettlement, it is important to test whether and which models actually have an impact on refugees' settlement and integration.

- **Attaining value for money.** M&E systems can enable resettlement actors to track the resources allocated at each phase of the programme and compare the cost-effectiveness of different models of, for example, how states select refugees for resettlement and how they conduct predeparture orientation. This information can help inform decisions on future funding allocations and can indicate what is possible at different levels of investment.

In recent years, as resettlement authorities in many countries have raced to set up or expand programmes, there has been limited bandwidth for M&E activities. The current slowdown in international protection operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a window for policymakers, programme designers, and evaluation teams to elevate M&E from an afterthought to centre stage. To capitalise on this opportunity to create or strengthen M&E frameworks, policymakers should consider the following steps:

- **Find an M&E champion.** A leader within the resettlement programme can generate enthusiasm and build bridges between stakeholders. Particularly in resettlement authorities without a strong culture of M&E, leadership is essential to building the momentum to launch such a framework.
- **Build consensus on key objectives for the resettlement programme, and for the M&E framework.** By defining programme goals and demonstrating progress towards them, the stakeholders involved in resettlement will be better positioned to secure continued buy-in from politicians and the public. Equally, focusing minds on the objectives for the M&E system can help commit stakeholders to participating in data collection activities and sharing their data.
- **Determine which research methods can collect the desired information.** In addition to matching data collection to objectives, it is important to consider which formats would be most useful for capturing and sharing this information with different audiences, such as political leaders, programme designers, implementing organisations, and the public.
- **Take stock of existing data collection tools and think creatively about how these could be redeployed.** There may be many rich sources of information in different pockets of national resettlement systems. Bringing these sources together can help get M&E systems off the ground. This review can also identify where new processes are needed to fill gaps.

With many different approaches to resettlement having sprung up across the globe, more in-depth research is needed to answer questions about whether any of the myriad models are more effective than others—and what works when, where, and why. This knowledge will help countries optimise their programmes and adapt more quickly to new challenges and opportunities. More experienced resettlement states can also use this knowhow to tailor their operations and the support they offer to new resettlement countries, allowing them to hit the ground running and dodge avoidable mistakes. Finally, it could help all states restart resettlement after the hiatus forced by the coronavirus pandemic, enabling them to offer the best possible solutions for refugees and the communities in which they live.

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1 Introduction

When Switzerland launched a two-year pilot resettlement scheme for 500 refugees in 2013–15, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was foundational to shaping the design of the programme.[1] The federal government decided to provide additional integration support to the cantons in the form of a lump sum of 20,000 CHF (approximately 16,500 euros) per refugee.[2] In return, the cantons were required to assign each refugee an integration coach within three months of arrival and draft individual integration plans based on goals set at the federal level in areas such as language competence, access to health care and the labour market, housing, and basic knowledge about Swiss society. The integration coaches monitored refugees' progress for two years after arrival, collecting information every six months, and one official in each canton was responsible for entering this information into a database so that a partner university could analyse it at a later stage.

This evidence-based approach quickly demonstrated the benefits of integration coaching. The monitoring process also pushed the federal administration and the cantons to continuously improve their operations, strengthened cooperation between local and federal actors, and offered concrete evidence of good practices and lessons learnt that could be shared. Setting up M&E systems can come with challenges, as the Swiss experienced with variations in the quality and consistency of reported data and interpretations of that information, but it helps authorities identify kinks in the resettlement process and smooth them out.

With the COVID-19 pandemic having ground resettlement operations to a halt around the world, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers have an unexpected opportunity to turn attention towards creating or strengthening their M&E systems. The ability to monitor progress and systematically apply lessons learnt is more crucial than ever. Since the early 2000s, several new states have launched or piloted resettlement programmes, especially in Europe, and some existing resettlement countries have increased their intake.[3] But in order to give national decisionmakers a firm evidence base on which to confidently initiate or strengthen operations, and to generate the political will and public support necessary for a sustainable programme, resettlement actors need to focus more attention on gathering evidence of successes and distilling lessons about what works, when, and why.

The success of resettlement programmes tends to be measured by the number of vulnerable refugees resettled to a new home. But beyond these numbers, governments, international organisations, and civil society often do not systematically collect information regarding refugees' quality of life after arrival, how resettlement affects receiving communities and the communities refugees leave behind, and how resettlement fits with other policy objectives. The assumption that refugees will be better off after resettlement may indeed be true, but there are limited data on how resettled refugees fare economically, socially, politically, medically, and psychologically—both in the short term and especially over the longer

1 Author interview with Niina Tanskanen, Specialist, Federal Department of Justice and Police, Directorate for Immigration and Integration, Integration Department, Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, 15 February 2019; presentation by Loredana Monte, Integration Officer, Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, to the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) Working Group on Resettlement, *Resettlement in Switzerland*, The Hague, 16–19 February 2016.

2 This was on top of the regular social welfare and integration support paid for by the federal government.

3 The number of countries receiving resettlement submissions from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) increased from 22 in 2003 to 35 in 2016, before declining to 29 in 2018. See UNHCR, *The Three-Year (2019-2021) Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019).

term.[4] These limitations exist even within well-established programmes that have undergone decades of learning and finetuning; the United States, for example, does not regularly collect data on the impact of resettlement on refugees[5] and host communities. Rather, these programmes tend to limit monitoring to inputs and immediate results, such as how many refugees have been resettled and from which countries.

This report examines why it is important to include an M&E system within resettlement programmes, whether they are new or long-standing. It lays out a road map on how to get started with M&E and sketches a broad set of choices and challenges that the designers and operators of an M&E system are likely to encounter. These insights are partly drawn from a pilot M&E project conducted by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe in partnership with Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands under the framework of the European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) project.[6] These three countries reflect a mix of newer and more established resettlement programmes, as well as those with and without a private sponsorship component. The pilot initiative supported these countries in bringing together key public and nongovernmental stakeholders to think through the objectives of the resettlement programme, define indicators to track progress towards these objectives, and take stock of existing data tools and the need to design new ones.

2 What Role Should Monitoring and Evaluation Play in Resettlement?

Monitoring resettlement programmes and analysing the data collected has three core benefits. First, it can test whether a programme is delivering on its policy objectives. Second, it allows programme designers and implementing partners to identify strategies and practices that improve resettlement operations and make adjustments where needed. Doing so not only makes the programme more effective and cost-efficient, but it can also help it become more sustainable, grow, and potentially be replicated elsewhere. Finally, M&E can strengthen understanding of how resettled refugees, host communities, and communities of origin are affected by resettlement. This information may provide ammunition for strategic communication activities. These benefits are discussed in the subsections that follow, as are the reasons uptake of M&E has to date been limited or slow in resettlement programmes across the globe.

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4 Hanne Beirens and Susan Fratzke, *Taking Stock of Refugee Resettlement: Policy Objectives, Practical Tradeoffs, and the Evidence Base* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2017).

5 Nadwa Mossaad et al., 'Determinants of Refugee Naturalization in the United States', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115, no. 37 (2018): 9175–80.

6 Under the framework of the European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK), the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe worked with three European states (Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands) to explore how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems can be established, strengthened, operationalised, and used strategically. MPI Europe provides methodological support and operational guidance to improve data collection and analysis. This process includes conducting preliminary interviews with key stakeholders; exchanging relevant documents on data collection; and hosting an M&E workshop with key actors to identify and prioritise between objectives of the resettlement programme (and its individual phases), develop indicators to measure these objectives, and chart how to collect the relevant data.

BOX 1
What is monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring. The continuous process of collecting and analysing information to assess how well a project, programme, or policy is performing, monitoring is used to inform day-to-day management and decisions, identifying problems and solving them quickly. It can also track performance against expected results, compare across programmes, and analyse trends over time.

Evaluation. By comparison, evaluation is the assessment of an ongoing or completed programme or policy, its design, implementation, and results. It investigates whether an initiative achieved what it set out to do, and how or why it was successful or not. It examines the relevance of the intervention, along with its efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, allowing lessons learnt to be incorporated into the future decision-making processes and operations of both implementing partners and donors.

Indicators. These specific and observable characteristics can be used to measure achievement, identify the changes resulting from an intervention, or help assess the performance of an actor. They should be clearly linked to the goals and activities of the intervention.

Sources: Paul J. Gertler et al., *Impact Evaluation in Practice*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: World Bank Group and Inter-American Development Bank, 2016); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management* (Paris: OECD, 2002).

A. Assessing the attainment of strategic objectives

Documenting a resettlement programme's objectives and the degree to which they are attained is crucially important to sustaining political support for resettlement. It first requires mapping the programme's objectives, with some laid down in official documents and others conveyed in, for example, speeches given before national parliaments. Beyond assessing whether an individual programme has met its aims, this is also an important means of testing the assumptions that underpin resettlement ambitions, particularly when it comes to using resettlement to reduce irregular arrivals or strengthen cooperation with third countries. The objectives for resettlement programmes typically fall into three categories: (1) value-based and humanitarian motivations; (2) use of resettlement to further a broader strategy to address displacement; and (3) national interests, often including foreign policy and border management goals.[7]

This first objective is the most consistent among resettlement actors, who usually agree that resettlement is a global protection tool and reflects international solidarity.[8] Monitoring should track whether resettlement meets its humanitarian objectives and offers sufficient places to vulnerable refugees (e.g., as a share of those in need of resettlement or relative to other countries' efforts). For example, in 2015 the European Union launched an EU-wide resettlement scheme that aimed to show solidarity with countries hosting large

7 Beirens and Fratzke, *Taking Stock of Refugee Resettlement.*
8 See, for instance, European Migration Network (EMN), *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe – What Works?* (Brussels: EMN, 2016).

(primarily) Syrian refugee populations.[9] To measure progress on this policy objective, the European Commission regularly released reports on the number of refugees each Member State committed to resettling under the scheme and how many were effectively resettled.[10] Beyond such figures, there is less monitoring of harder-to-quantify objectives, including those related to how resettlement programmes are managed and how resettled refugees fare once in their new countries.

Refugee resettlement programmes' aims are often…

1. value-based and humanitarian motivations
2. part of a broader strategy to tackle displacement
3. attuned to national interests, such as foreign policy & border management

When resettlement is used strategically, as part of a broader set of durable solutions for refugees, resettlement countries should assess when and where resettlement best fulfils this role and whether it is in fact strengthening the protection space in countries of first asylum.[11] This complex issue requires thorough analysis of the profile of the refugees being resettled[12] and how investments in resettlement compare with support for other durable solutions—particularly, the efforts by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners to enhance the social and economic integration of refugees in countries that host large displaced populations. Yet, few data systems and analyses look at these questions in depth. Monitoring data are also lacking in terms of how resettlement programmes affect refugees who remain in first-asylum countries and the communities in which they live.[13] While the assumption is that more resettlement should result in a better environment for the refugees who stay behind, as this alleviates some pressure on local service providers, housing stock, labour markets, and more, this link is not straightforward and requires more analysis of the actions host governments may or may not take to facilitate refugees' access to rights and public services.[14]

9 In 2015, the European Union set up its first resettlement programme with commitments from all 28 Member States and four other countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland) to resettle 20,000 refugees. This scheme was renewed in 2017, with a two-year programme and the commitment of 20 EU countries to resettle 50,000 refugees. Member States also pledged around 30,000 resettlement places for 2020. See European Commission, 'Delivering On Resettlement' (fact sheet, European Commission, Brussels, October 2019); European Commission, 'Progress Report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration' (COM [2019] 481 final, 16 October 2019).

10 European Commission, 'Progress Report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration'.

11 As per the UNHCR *Resettlement Handbook*, the idea is that the most vulnerable individuals can be resettled so that refugees who stay in countries of first asylum have access to more services. See UNHCR, 'UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and Country Chapters', updated April 2018.

12 UNHCR, *Resettlement Assessment Tool: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Refugees* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019).

13 Alexander Betts, 'Resettlement: Where's the Evidence, What's the Strategy?', *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017): 73–75.

14 In 2007, eight countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) decided to resettle large numbers of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal under the assumption that it would improve the situation for those who stayed in Nepal. However, there was limited buy-in to the scheme from the Nepalese and Bhutanese governments, and research indicates that the remaining refugees faced increased challenges in certain cases. For example, many of the refugees who chose not to be resettled were older, and their younger relatives' resettlement resulted in a loss of family support. See Bipin Ghimire, 'A "Successful" Refugee Resettlement Programme: The Case of Nepal', *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017): 14–15.

A third set of objectives relates to resettlement countries' national and domestic agendas, and particularly their foreign policy, migration, and border management aims. Indeed, a largely untested dimension of resettlement programmes is how they affect ties with third countries[15]—especially those that host large refugee populations—and how these ties might shape their willingness to cooperate on migration management. Analysis of these dynamics could help discern which partner countries value resettlement the most, and which ones favour other types of engagement, such as humanitarian and development funding to assist the refugee populations they host.

In addition, countries sometimes see resettlement as a way to create a safe and legal migration pathway for refugees and to reduce irregular arrivals.[16] However, protection actors question whether this migration-management objective is valid for what they consider a purely humanitarian action,[17] and countries do not have the evidence to draw a causal relationship between increased resettlement and decreases in irregular spontaneous arrivals. More comprehensive monitoring systems are needed to test that link and provide policymakers the evidence to make well-founded decisions about whether this objective is relevant for resettlement programmes.[18]

Gathering evidence of the achievements of resettlement systems—within the destination country but also in countries of origin and first asylum—can promote (more) resettlement, especially during times when its value is questioned. This involves making objectives explicit, thinking through how to assess them (i.e., how to measure them, conduct research, and test assumptions), and then adjusting politicians' expectations. Even with the highest quality evidence, some political leaders may still decide to downscale or suspend programmes, but such decisions are more difficult to justify if the benefits of resettlement are well documented.

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B. Facilitating continuous learning

Beyond these high-level and political objectives, M&E systems can help resettlement actors track the performance of their programme and tweak their activities and operations to improve results. If done in

15 In a public letter to President Trump in September 2019, retired generals and admirals stated that the U.S. resettlement programme 'serves critical national security interests' because it shows U.S. allies that the United States will assist them in times of need. See Alicia A. Caldwell, 'Trump Administration Mulls Cutting Refugee Cap, Keeping Iraqi Program', *Wall Street Journal*, 3 September 2019.

16 European Commission, 'A European Agenda on Migration' (COM [2015] 240 final, 13 May 2015). For an analysis by country, see EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe,* 20.

17 See, for example, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), 'Joint Statement: NGOs Call on the EU and its Member States to Demonstrate Leadership on Resettlement at the Global Refugee Forum 2019' (news release, 31 October 2019).

18 For example, in 2014 the United States launched the Central American Minors (CAM) Program, an in-country refugee processing programme that aimed to decrease the number of unaccompanied children travelling from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to the United States. The number of arrivals ultimately went down before the end of the programme was announced in 2017, but the absence of a thorough monitoring mechanism means it has not been possible to conclude whether the programme had any direct or indirect impact on arrivals. See U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), 'In-Country Refugee/Parole Processing for Minors in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala (Central American Minors – CAM)', updated 15 November 2017.

a systematic and regular manner, programme learning can become an ongoing exercise. The information gleaned can, for instance, improve understanding of the link between predeparture cultural orientation and the integration of refugees after they arrive in their new country.

Even without a formal M&E system, resettlement authorities from the three countries that participated in the EU-FRANK pilot project—Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands—reported gaining insights from project activities into what works and trying to adapt their operations accordingly.[19] Such feedback loops often hold the seeds of a monitoring and learning approach, but there are benefits to being more systematic. Indeed, without a formal M&E system, information is not regularly recorded and analysed. Learning tends to be ad hoc and sporadic, often depending on the attentiveness of particularly talented and dedicated individuals. In addition, with so many moving parts and partners with distinct responsibilities, it can be difficult for resettlement authorities to keep tabs on all of them without a formal system—especially as resettlement quotas increase.[20]

A dedicated M&E system, by contrast, generates the evidence base for systematic analysis and improvements. For instance, Australia launched a longitudinal survey, 'Building a New Life in Australia', in 2013 that tracks how refugees adapt to their new life in the country.[21] Insights from the survey formed the basis of a discussion between the researchers and health experts to raise awareness of the challenges refugees face and how health services can better address their specific needs.[22]

M&E frameworks also have the advantage of strengthening institutional memory and facilitating comparisons over time. This can help insulate resettlement authorities against the potential disruptions and loss of knowledge caused by staff turnover. Better M&E creates a record of why some approaches were favoured at one point in time, their benefits and disadvantages, and why they were continued or abandoned. In the end, this process can help make programmes more sustainable.

> *Better M&E creates a record of why some approaches were favoured at one point in time, their benefits and disadvantages, and why they were continued or abandoned.*

Beyond improving existing resettlement programmes, M&E systems also support growth and innovation. For example, Germany, Ireland, and New Zealand have all used (or are conducting) evaluations of their community sponsorship programmes in order to study how successfully the initiatives were rolled out and

19 Comments by representatives of the Resettlement Unit, Italian Ministry of the Interior, during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Rome, 12 March 2019; comments by representatives of the Dutch Central Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers, Immigration and Naturalisation Service, and Ministry of Justice during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, The Hague, 16 September 2019; comments by representatives of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Dublin, 15 October 2019.

20 For example, in Belgium the number of resettled refugees more than tripled between 2016 and 2017, reaching 1,309 in 2017. Such a sharp increase can make it more difficult for resettlement authorities to remain closely involved in informal monitoring on the ground. See Fedasil, '1,309 Refugees Resettled in 2017' (press release, 22 January 2018).

21 Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), 'Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants', accessed 15 November 2019.

22 See, for example, see the Career Pathways Pilot programme described in AIFS, 'Building a New Life in Australia' (news release, Australian Government, Melbourne, 2017).

what changes are needed if the decision is made to scale them up.[23] M&E is also likely to support innovation because reliable systems that can quickly verify what works usually foster an environment more conducive to launching pilots and testing new approaches.

C. Securing public support by demonstrating success

Resettlement programmes require a degree of public support to be politically viable, and therefore sustainable. Evidence of success can go a long way in keeping members of the public onside. But furnishing such evidence can be difficult when key questions about what happens to refugees after arrival remain largely unanswered.[24] While there is a vast literature on the integration of humanitarian migrants, studies rarely distinguish between resettled refugees and those who enter via other pathways. But resettled refugees are often particularly vulnerable and may need different benchmarks than other groups. In addition, the concept of integration itself lacks an agreed-upon definition among resettlement actors.[25] For example, New Zealand describes five main objectives: self-sufficiency, participation, health and wellbeing, education, and housing.[26] Meanwhile, the UK Home Office distinguishes 14 key domains of integration, ranging from work and housing to digital skills and stability (described in Section 5.A.).[27]

When it comes to the effects of resettlement on host societies, there are many qualitative accounts of positive impact. UNHCR regularly publishes stories about resettlement, including blog posts about refugees and their interactions with host communities. For example, recent stories by the agency, as well as qualitative studies by others, have described how resettled refugees have helped to revive small villages in France.[28] Larger-scale, quantitative, and longitudinal studies, however, are rarer. While local stories can bring a valuable personal lens to a complex topic, more robust collection of evidence in this area could bolster efforts to secure public support for resettlement in EU countries and help save programmes on the political chopping block. It could also help identify where and why the benefits of resettlement may accrue unevenly and how this could be addressed.

Yet, it is important to recognise that the generation of data, in and of itself, is often not enough to guarantee public and political support for resettlement. In the United States, for the first time in 2017, a draft study by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation examined the national fiscal impact of refugees and showed that refugees are net contributors to the U.S. economy, bringing in USD 63 billion more in revenue to federal, state, and local governments than they cost

23 For example, see New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE), *Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category Pilot – Process Evaluation* (Wellington: MBIE, Evidence and Insights Branch, 2019). The Irish evaluation is currently unpublished and the German evaluation is underway.

24 For instance, see Mossaad et al., 'Determinants of Refugee Naturalization in the United States'.

25 According to Cheung and Phillimore, the 'lack of conceptual clarity and the multi-dimensional nature of integration mean few attempts have been made to measure the extent to which refugees are integrated'. See Sin Yi Cheung and Jenny Phillimore, *Quantitative Analysis of Integration and Social Policy Outcomes* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

26 Immigration New Zealand, *Refugee Resettlement: New Zealand Resettlement Strategy* (Auckland: Immigration New Zealand, n.d.).

27 Carolyne Ndofor-Tah et al., *Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework 2019*, 3rd ed. (London: UK Home Office, 2019).

28 UNHCR, 'French Village Sets an Example of How to Welcome Refugees' (news release, 28 January 2019); UNHCR, 'French Village Opens Its Doors and Its Heart to African Refugees' (news release, 27 April 2018). Other sources have also documented these effects of resettlement on French towns. See, for example, Matthieu Tardis, *Une Autre Histoire de la 'Crise des Réfugiés': La Réinstallation dans les Petites Villes et les Zones Rurales en France* (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2019).

between 2005 and 2014.[29] However, in politically charged environments, such evidence is only a first step, not a failsafe; despite commissioning the study, its key finding was rejected by the Trump administration, which maintained the view that resettlement is an unreasonable fiscal burden.[30] Particularly where resettlement programmes are politicised and politically polarising, information on the benefits for host societies must be paired with strategic communication to be effective.[31]

D. *What are the obstacles to implementation?*

Despite all of the advantages that can accrue from an M&E system, four stumbling blocks have long prevented countries from making concrete progress in documenting and analysing how their resettlement programmes are performing: a lack of monitoring culture among resettlement actors, the default focus on getting a programme up and running, gaps and compatibility issues within the available data, and concerns about how the findings could be used.[32]

In many countries, there is not a strong M&E culture within the departments responsible for resettlement. As a result, the launch of a new programme is unlikely to trigger the call for solid monitoring mechanisms among programme designers. And even if practitioners consider monitoring an important part of their activities and make the case for it, political leaders may not be comfortable with the prospect of investing significant resources in research, monitoring, and assessment when these investments could instead go towards the operations themselves.

Common Stumbling Blocks

1 Lack of an existing M&E culture

2 Focus on programme operations

3 Data gaps and compatibility issues

4 Concerns about how findings will be used

In the absence of an M&E tradition, monitoring may also be an afterthought for busy practitioners. Since 2015, many EU countries have launched or expanded their resettlement activities,[33] and their priority has been setting up operational systems and getting their programme rolling. For instance, resettlement in Ireland and Italy really kicked off in 2015, and resettlement actors in these two countries had to establish protocols for each stage of the process, from criteria for selecting the refugees they would resettle to thinking through the support they would provide newcomers after arrival.[34] These decisions needed to be

29 A copy of this study was published by the *New York Times*, 'Rejected Report Shows Revenue Brought In by Refugees', *New York Times*, 19 September 2017.

30 Kathleen Newland and Randy Capps, 'Why Hide the Facts about Refugee Costs and Benefits?' (commentary, MPI, Washington, DC, September 2017).

31 See, for example, Aliyyah Ahad and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *Communicating Strategically about Immigrant Integration: Policymakers Perspectives* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2019).

32 The EMN reports, for instance, that the main dimension of resettlement that is reported on is the use of EU funding. See EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe.*

33 The number of EU countries participating in the UNHCR resettlement scheme rose from 16 in 2015 to 21 in 2017, before falling again to 16 in 2018 and 17 in 2019. Only 11 EU Member States have resettled consistently each year between 2015 and 2019. See UNHCR, 'Resettlement Data', accessed 26 May 2020.

34 Comments by representatives of the Resettlement Unit, Italian Ministry of the Interior, during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Rome, 12 March 2019; comments by representatives of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Dublin, 15 October 2019.

made quickly, responding to pressing needs as they arose, and taking a step back for thorough assessment was often not a top priority for teams facing daunting new tasks. As a result, data about how the newly established mechanisms were performing were not systematically gathered, stored, and analysed.

In some countries, information on resettled refugees may already exist, albeit broken up across different pockets of the national resettlement system. This fragmentation of data, along with format and compatibility issues that limit the interoperability of data from different sources, may discourage resettlement actors from setting up an M&E system. In Italy, for instance, the SIPROIMI reception system is responsible for providing initial integration support. While SIPROIMI has a system for monitoring integration, its data do not typically distinguish between resettled refugees and people who have sought and been granted asylum after arriving in Europe. SIPROIMI also typically only reports on the few items they are required to track to the Resettlement Unit at the Ministry of the Interior. Given that the majority of beneficiaries of international protection in Italy are spontaneous arrivals, it is therefore difficult to make conclusions about resettlement refugees based on data that is not systematically disaggregated.[35]

Finally, some resettlement actors have expressed concerns about how monitoring data could be misconstrued or politicised, especially by people who do not fully grasp the humanitarian dimension of the programme and the complexity of the integration process for resettled refugees. Having fled their country of origin, resettled refugees often face challenges (e.g., related to physical or mental health, or time spent out of work or education while in a refugee camp) that make it more difficult for them to adjust to the host society than newcomers who come through other migration channels, such as family and labour migrants.[36] Practitioners are well aware of these challenges, but policymakers less familiar with the issues may draw hasty conclusions about what they perceive to be the negative outcomes of resettlement. The idea of collecting more data on refugees' integration may thus be unwelcome where political support for resettlement is recent and fragile, or even in countries such as the United States and Denmark that have been involved in and promoted resettlement worldwide for many years but where it is recently facing more scepticism.[37]

3 What Information Can M&E for Resettlement Gather?

M&E is primarily a source of information and analysis to help resettlement policymakers and practitioners track progress on key programme objectives. It breaks these objectives down into observable measures and lays out the process for collecting and analysing the data (see Section 4). There are three main pieces of information that can be gathered through this process: how the programme is performing on its strategic and operational goals, what each component of the programme is achieving and how these components interact, and what the value for money is of the programme and its individual parts. Each of these can be traced over the short, medium, and long term.

35 Comments by representatives of the Resettlement Unit, Italian Ministry of the Interior, during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Rome, 12 March 2019.

36 UK research shows that many resettled refugees in the country face huge long-term inequalities, including in work and education, especially those who enter with lower levels of formal education. See Michel Collyer et al., *A Long-Term Commitment: Integration of Resettled Refugees in the UK* (Sussex: University of Sussex, 2018).

37 Emma Wallis, 'The Netherlands Grants Asylum to at Least 630 Children', InfoMigrants, 30 January 2019.

A. Overall programme effectiveness

A well-designed M&E system should be able to assess the overall effectiveness of a resettlement programme in reaching its objectives. For each overarching objective, the M&E system will need to consider the degree to which the intended impact has been reached and whether the observed changes can be attributed to the resources invested and activities undertaken within the programme. The programme's M&E framework should make explicit the assumptions underlying the resettlement activities—that is, how particular processes and inputs are expected to deliver the desired results.

These assumptions based on research, previous experience, expert knowledge, or political goals are made about the links between a programme's activities and resources (inputs), immediate results (outputs), medium-term results (outcomes), and longer-term results (impact). Identifying these hypotheses is a crucial step in monitoring whether the factors considered important to programme success are in fact essential, and in testing whether broader assumptions about effectiveness are accurate. For instance, as part of the EU-Turkey Statement, EU Member States pledged to resettle Syrian refugees from Turkey in return for Ankara's commitment to strengthen border controls, readmit refugees and migrants from the Greek islands, and grant additional rights to Syrian refugees in Turkey.[38] For the European Union and its Member States, monitoring how the Turkish authorities perceive the bloc's resettlement efforts should be critical to measuring its effects on their broader cooperation. It may turn out that resettlement alone is not enough and would need to be paired with other measures, such as visa liberalisation, funding, or diplomatic support, to be effective. M&E systems can help policymakers test a wide range of assumptions about outputs, outcomes, and impact in a resettlement programme, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Measuring the results of a resettlement programme: Characteristics and examples

	Short-term outputs	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term impacts
Characteristics	- Immediate results of the programme - Easy to quantify and measure - Often based on administrative data, such as on participation or test scores	- Changes for refugees or their immediate communities that result from the programme - More difficult to capture and may require additional information or data collection tools beyond administrative data - Usually a mix of qualitative and quantitative dimensions	- Broader societal changes that result from the programme - Changes are more difficult to attribute to the programme as other factors may play a role (i.e., context, other policy interventions) - Usually a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, including longitudinal studies
Examples	- Number of refugees resettled - Number of hours of language lessons resettled refugees received - Number of joint selection missions conducted by resettlement states	- Number of resettled refugees in employment - Resettled refugees' level of job satisfaction - Resettled refugees' level of language proficiency	- Rate of naturalisation among resettled refugees - Development/expansion of a common EU resettlement framework - Change in the number of asylum seekers arriving spontaneously in Europe

Source: Compilation by the authors.

B. Effectiveness of and links between programme elements

38 European Council, 'EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016' (press release, 18 March 2016); UNHCR, 'Commission Presents Recommendation for a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey for Refugees from Syria' (press release, 14 December 2015).

In addition to looking at the overall effectiveness of resettlement, M&E can be used to specifically assess each part of a programme and determine how its design can be made more relevant, its effects improved, and its cost-efficiency strengthened (see Section 3.C. for cost-efficiency). This allows a distinction between design failure and implementation failure. The design of activities may not lead to the expected results if the link between them is not as straightforward as project partners had assumed (e.g., that a two-hour predeparture orientation will improve refugees' integration after arrival). Meanwhile, the implementation of a programme element may fall short if resettlement actors fail to deliver the planned activities (e.g., if only a minority of refugees participated in the predeparture orientation).

The resettlement process is comprised of a series of chronological and interconnected phases: (1) the identification by UNHCR of refugee candidates for resettlement and referral to national resettlement units; (2) national resettlement authorities organising and undertaking selection missions to countries hosting displaced populations; (3) case examination and decision-making by national resettlement authorities (i.e., selection); (4) predeparture orientation (including cultural orientation) to prepare refugees for the move and life after it; (5) travel arrangements; and (6) reception and postarrival services (including integration assistance). It is important to monitor each of these steps separately as they have different functions and are implemented by a variety of stakeholders. These actors tend to be funded via different mechanisms, often leading to different internal logics, objectives, and reporting requirements. It is for this reason that resettlement experts have called for further exploration of how the actors involved in the selection (e.g., UNHCR, nongovernment organisations, and/or the countries hosting displaced persons) can affect the effectiveness of this phase, in terms of filling quotas and reaching out to the most vulnerable members of displaced populations, especially in urban settings.[39]

It is important to monitor each of these steps separately as they have different functions and are implemented by a variety of stakeholders.

Monitoring and analysing the performance of different resettlement phases also allows for testing the links between different levers, such as between selection, predeparture orientation, and the integration outcomes of resettled refugees. In Denmark, for example, a 2004–05 reform mandated that officials assess the integration potential of refugees being considered for resettlement based on their language skills, educational background, work experience, family situation, age, and motivation for seeking to be resettled.[40] However, a comparison of the employment rates for those selected in 2003, before the integration-potential assessment came into effect, and those selected afterwards showed that refugees who arrived before 2003 had a higher employment rate. This finding helped debunk the assumption that there was a direct and systematic link between the criteria used to select refugees for resettlement and their

39 Amy Slaughter, 'How NGOs Have Helped Shape Resettlement', *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017); Melonee Douglas, Rachel Levitan, and Lucy W Kiama, 'Expanding the Role of NGOs in Resettlement', *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017).

40 This reform was controversial, leading to accusations of cherry-picking resettled refugees according to the labour market needs of the state rather than the refugees' protection needs. See Katrine Syppli Kohl, 'The Evolution of Danish Refugee Resettlement Policy, 1978-2016', Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies, 24 November 2016.

labour market integration, and demonstrated the need to consider a wider set of factors when planning predeparture and postarrival programme elements.[41]

It may be tricky to establish causality or a direct link between changes in one phase and impact in another, and resettlement actors often rely on assumptions that can be difficult to verify. However, by developing a solid evidence base, evaluators will be able to make more informed hypotheses about the links between activities, and test and update them.

C. (Cost-)efficiency

In addition to tracking the overarching and segment-by-segment effectiveness of a resettlement programme, it is important to monitor whether the right types of investments are being made to support programme success. To do so, it can be helpful for resettlement authorities to step back and consider how well they are managing programme operations, and how refining or altering procedures may affect the budget.

An M&E system allows resettlement authorities to track how resources are allocated in each phase of the programme, with what results, and where a shift in distribution may be required. For example, Canada uses three different models to screen and process the applications of refugees in resettlement cases: the source-country, single-processing, and group-processing models.[42] A 2011 evaluation by the Canadian resettlement agency's evaluation division found that the source-country model required more time and resources than the other two models.[43] The group-processing model, which allows large-scale resettlement of refugees with similar sociocultural characteristics, also had additional advantages, such as allowing Canada-based service providers to develop programmes tailored to the group. Such findings can help resettlement actors decide which models to prioritise (and scale up).

Identifying how much time and resources are spent at each point of the resettlement programme allows resettlement authorities to examine different spending models or to compare the costs of, for example, different predeparture measures for resettled refugees. For example, a 2007 study by U.S. researchers showed that pre-emptively providing antimalarial treatment for refugees from West Africa during the predeparture phase was more cost-effective than waiting to see who developed symptoms after arrival and treating them in the more expensive U.S. health-care system.[44]

Examining inputs can also help resettlement countries identify redundancies and potential economies of scale that could be achieved either within the programme or through collaboration between countries,

41 These can include preparation of refugees before departure (e.g., skills assessment, contacts with potential employers), support upon arrival by public employment services and other stakeholders to help refugees identify and access potential jobs, placement and housing in areas where jobs are available that match refugees' skills, and the broader economic situation in the host country.

42 The source-country model allows individuals to apply for refugee status without leaving their country of origin, with Canadian officials making a determination on their eligibility and admissibility. Meanwhile, UNHCR identifies and refers refugees under the single-processing and group-processing models (where individuals are selected from the same ethnic and cultural group), and states review referrals on a case-by-case basis.

43 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Evaluation Division, 2011).

44 Stefan Collinet-Adler et al., 'Financial Implications of Refugee Malaria: The Impact of Pre-Departure Presumptive Treatment with Anti-Malarial Drugs', *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 77, no. 3 (2007): 458–63.

especially at the EU level. In Italy, for instance, the three humanitarian corridor partner organisations conduct their own predeparture orientations, which are distinct from those that are part of the national resettlement scheme.[45] By taking stock of the activities of these different orientations, their associated costs, and expected results, the governmental and partner organisation actors involved may determine that it would be more efficient to design a shared approach that they all could deploy. Improving a programme's cost-efficiency can also have other benefits, such as freeing up funds to provide longer-term support to refugees once in the resettlement country or contributing to an evidence-backed case for increasing a country's resettlement quota.

4 Road Map for an M&E Framework

After laying out what can be gained from monitoring and evaluation, the next question is how to build an M&E framework to support systematic learning throughout a programme. Getting started on M&E requires strong leadership to build momentum behind the idea and to get buy-in from other relevant stakeholders. Once support for an M&E system has been secured, resettlement authorities will need to decide on the opportune moment to launch it. Importantly, stakeholders must be clear on the objectives of both the resettlement scheme and the M&E framework to ensure that the latter captures the former.

Step 1. Getting the right actors involved

M&E can be a difficult sell—especially when busy stakeholders are unsure if they have the skills and resources to dedicate to the cause. Yet, ensuring that all of the relevant actors are on board is vital to a comprehensive approach to monitoring, wherein partners are willing to share their data, help with the analysis, and contribute to the drafting and implementation of recommendations. It is therefore essential to identify and secure the support and participation of key leaders within resettlement units and other relevant entities (e.g., municipalities, civil-society organisations), as they will take on a motivating and coordinating role (even where they do not conduct M&E activities themselves).

Finding the right 'champion' and gathering stakeholder support

A champion is often needed to advocate for M&E if it is to go beyond simply ticking a box and fulfilling contractual requirements to really promote learning. Key leaders within resettlement institutions can then ignite the interest of their colleagues and peers in other organisations. Multinational actors, such as the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and UNHCR, have the potential to take on a championing role by drawing on their vast network of state partners. In the case of Canada, the Evaluation Division within Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada has played this leadership role by continuously developing new methodologies to track the effects of resettlement on refugees and host communities.[46]

45 European Resettlement Network, *Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement* (Brussels: European Resettlement Network, 2017).

46 Comments by David Kurfurst, Director of Evaluations and Performance Management, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), during the workshop Expert Workshop on Monitoring and Evaluating Private Sponsorship Programmes, organised by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg, 31 October 2019.

Champions may also be found among the nongovernmental organisations that play a role in humanitarian protection pathways. For example, in the United Kingdom, a formative evaluation of the community sponsorship programme was initially instigated by the civil-society group Citizens UK and the Methodist Church. The Institute for Research into Superdiversity at the University of Birmingham conducted the evaluation and was able to secure buy-in from the Home Office and RESET (an arm's-length organisation[47] supporting sponsorship groups) by regularly sharing actionable feedback.[48]

Ultimately, having champions within different institutions is essential for generating a broad base of support for M&E. It is also an important means of gaining access to the data evaluators will need.

Deciding who should take the lead on M&E activities

With sufficient buy-in secured, the next step is to assign responsibility for designing and managing the M&E process, from collecting and analysing data to producing reports and disseminating findings. In the case of resettlement, allocating roles and tasks within an M&E system is rarely straightforward because of the variety of governmental and nongovernmental bodies involved in different phases and activities. Given this diverse assortment of actors, it may be unclear who should take the lead in the M&E framework and, perhaps even more controversially, who should finance it.

In practice, the entity responsible for overseeing and funding M&E is often the national government, given its ownership of the programme, interest in seeing the exercise succeed, and the fact that other partners recognise its legitimacy for this task. Thus, in Italy, the Resettlement Unit within the Ministry of the Interior manages the programme and conducts internal monitoring.[49] But the national authority responsible for resettlement is by no means the only choice, particularly if they do not have an established M&E culture and the necessary capacity. In Germany, for example, the Federal Ministry of the Interior plays a key role in the country's refugee resettlement programme and private sponsorship pilot, but it is the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, which has a built-in research centre, that has been in charge of conducting evaluations.[50]

One of the tradeoffs to consider is whether M&E should be performed internally or externally.

Next, the body responsible for the M&E process needs to decide who will implement activities on the ground. For example, the United Kingdom relies on a mixture of internal M&E coordinated by the Home Office and external evaluators, including consultancies contracted by the government (e.g., Ipsos MORI).[51] One of the tradeoffs to consider is whether M&E should be performed internally or externally. External actors such as universities and consultancies have the capacity needed, in the form of trained researchers and data

47 In the United Kingdom, an arm's-length organisation is a not-for-profit organisation set up by a government authority to provide a service on behalf of that authority (e.g., to manage public housing).

48 The evaluation was funded through the University of Birmingham and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), with the support of RESET, the organisation funded by the UK Home Office to support sponsorship groups.

49 Comments by representatives of the Italian Resettlement Unit, Ministry of the Interior, during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Rome, 12 March 2019.

50 German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 'Resettlement and the NesT programme', updated 14 November 2019.

51 Carrie Hough, *The UK Government's Approach to Evaluating the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes* (London: UK Home Office, 2018).

analysts. It is one of the reasons the authorities responsible for the Swiss pilot resettlement scheme outsourced data cleaning and analysis to a university; they also found this exercise to be very time consuming and decided it would be more efficient to delegate it.[52] Third-party monitoring organisations may also be more independent since they are not directly involved in the resettlement machinery and have less at stake when it comes to favourable or negative findings. On the other hand, external actors may face more obstacles in accessing the data needed or fully appreciating the internal constraints faced by resettlement authorities.

The benefits of relying on actors within one of the entities that implements the resettlement programme are essentially the inverse of the challenges external actors face. Internal actors should have unfiltered access to confidential or sensitive data, and in real time. This is the case, for instance, for the dedicated evaluation team within Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, which has been following the country's resettlement programmes for years. These players are usually more aware of the internal limitations and politics surrounding resettlement, and they may be in a better position to make tailored recommendations. However, while the Canadian team has strong research skills and is well versed in monitoring, the government entities that implement resettlement programmes in other countries often have more limited research capacity, unless this role was foreseen at the time budgets were set. Moreover, internal actors may have incentives to minimise negative discoveries, particularly where the resettlement programme is under heightened public or political scrutiny, or if the body conducting the M&E is self-evaluating and may face negative funding consequences. Relying on implementing bodies can also restrict M&E if other operational tasks take precedence over monitoring, potentially resulting in more limited data collection and analysis.

These options are not, however, exclusive. National governments may opt for a blended model that involves both internal and external actors in M&E, with the aim of playing on the strengths of each.

Step 2. Choosing the right starting point

The decision on when to launch an M&E system has important implications for how it shapes the resettlement programme, how integrated it is into resettlement processes, and the resources available. Building an M&E component into the programme from the very beginning has the benefit of helping stakeholders learn and adapt as early as possible. In contrast, it may be more difficult to adjust programmes once they have become set in a particular way of operating.

Canada's Operation Syrian Refugees, which ran from 2015 to 2016 and had monitoring built in from the beginning, is a good example of how early investments can help adjust the trajectory of a programme. The authorities produced a rapid impact evaluation a few months into the initiative, while also commissioning research to map out the challenges Syrians faced upon arrival.[53] The rapid evaluation allowed the programme to adapt its activities as it was rolling them out. This approach also incentivises the collection of key data at the start of the programme (i.e., a baseline) that further down the line will allow evaluators to do before-and-after comparisons. When it comes to measuring the impact of a resettlement programme on

52 Author interview with Niina Tanskanen, Specialist, Federal Department of Justice and Police, Directorate for Immigration and Integration, Integration Department, Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, 15 February 2019.

53 IRCC, Evaluation Division, *Syrian Outcomes Report* (Ottawa: IRCC, 2019).

local communities, having a baseline may make it possible to capture changing attitudes towards refugees, whether positive or negative, and accurately assess the costs of settlement on systems ranging from health care and education to social services.

In comparison, setting up M&E after a programme is up and running may be more costly and difficult. Having to later find additional funds, hire extra staff, or reallocate tasks among team members with full schedules is cumbersome. But the cases of Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands show that there are many benefits in setting up an M&E system even if a programme is already underway. Having overcome the initial growing pains that follow the launch of a new resettlement programme, partners often become more interested in taking a step back and examining the effects of their activities. For example, the EU-FRANK M&E pilot took place four years into the existence of the Irish resettlement programme[54] and coincided with the country's launch of a community sponsorship initiative. The Irish authorities were motivated to engage in M&E by the desire to inform service delivery in the traditional pathway, and to know how well resettlement was working in order to ensure a smooth launch of the new protection pathway.[55]

Ultimately, the decision about when to start monitoring and evaluating a resettlement programme also depends on factors such as capacity within resettlement authorities, reporting requirements, and institutional culture.

Step 3. Being clear on what objectives to monitor and evaluate

The next step is to map out what elements of the resettlement programme need to be regularly assessed and analysed to inform day-to-day management and decisions (i.e., monitoring), and what requires deeper investigation into how well initiatives have achieved their objectives (i.e., evaluation). The objectives to be monitored and evaluated may not be shared by all stakeholders involved in resettlement, from the political leadership to operational staff and implementing partners. And while some of these goals are explicit and publicly advertised, others are more implicit or even sensitive.

One way to overcome these differences and establish a clear set of objectives for M&E purposes is to convene a workshop at which the relevant stakeholders can map out and debate these objectives—an approach that was tested during the EU-FRANK pilots. In Italy, for instance, a half-day session gathered representatives of all of the institutions involved in resettlement to talk about the programme's objectives, how they have evolved since its launch in 2015, and where the ambitions of partner organisations may diverge. Afterwards, several participants reported that this was the first time the country's resettlement actors had gathered together to talk about the strategic aspects of resettlement and take a step back to discuss areas where their perspectives do not align. While participants did not reach consensus on all fronts, this meeting was a unique opportunity for exchange and debate about the programme dimensions that should be made M&E priorities.

54 Ireland has conducted some form of resettlement since 2000, but it was scaled up in 2015 under the *Irish Protection Act*. See UNHCR, 'Ireland', in *Resettlement Handbook* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016).

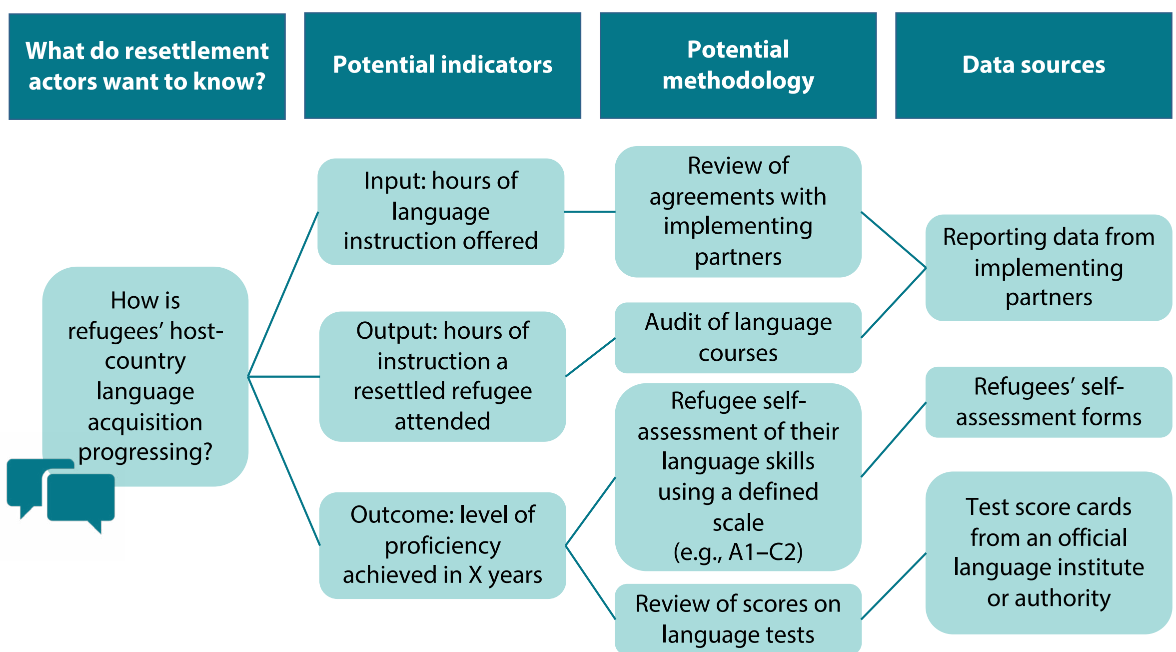
55 Comments by representatives of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by the MPI Europe, Dublin, 15 October 2019.

Step 4. Turning objectives into measurements

After mapping out what resettlement agencies wish to learn through M&E, the monitoring team needs to identify indicators that translate the programme's objectives into observable pieces to be tracked over time. These indicators may need to capture how the programme is being implemented (in terms of the process) and its results in the short, medium, and long term (aligned with the output, outcome, and impact objectives described in Table 1). A comprehensive M&E framework for resettlement could include indicators measuring the programme's effects on resettled refugees, host communities, countries of first asylum, and even other resettlement countries (e.g., whether and what good practices are exchanged, or if certain initiatives encourage other countries to resettle more refugees). Figure 1 provides an example of what this translation process could look like in practice.

FIGURE 1

Developing the methodology of a resettlement M&E framework



Source: Compilation by the authors.

As part of the M&E pilot project with Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands, MPI Europe developed a comprehensive list of input, output, and outcome indicators for each phase of the resettlement programme (e.g., predeparture orientation) and its components (e.g., language training). Some resettlement phases may be more straightforward to measure (e.g., a refugee's transfer from the first-asylum country to the resettlement country), while others may need a variety of indicators to assess the nuances of the programme's results. For example, in the case of integration, using only a small number of indicators—or indicators that are overly concentrated in one domain, such as access to the job market—can lead to conclusions that are too simplistic. As an example of good practice, in 2019 the United Kingdom updated its indicators of integration framework.[56] This new framework is structured around 14 domains that fall within

56 Ndofor-Tah et al., *Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework 2019*.

four broad categories, each with several potential indicators.[57] For example, rather than focusing on only one outcome for the domain of work (such as the share of refugees in paid employment), it lists a series of indicators that can be used to capture the complexity of this dimension, such as the types of work contracts held, satisfaction with current employment, and perceptions of employment opportunities and barriers to securing employment.

Although resettlement programmes span a vast set of operations, services, and experiences, it is not always possible to include every possible dimension in an M&E system. The types and number of indicators selected will thus need to be tailored based on the resources available to the monitoring team. The UK Home Office struck a balance with its resettlement monitoring framework, which was introduced in 2016 (before the update to the indicators of integration framework). It collects data on resettled refugees in the priority areas of English language acquisition, education, employment, health, social bridges and bonds, and secondary migration—capturing a dynamic view of programme impact but restricting the list of potential indicators to a more manageable number.[58]

Step 5. Developing the tools and processes to conduct M&E

The next step is to develop a plan to gather and analyse data on the indicators selected. There is a number of considerations to take into account to ensure that the data collection and subsequent analysis are valid and useful. M&E results should be based on a solid methodology and research practices in order to avoid being confounded by external factors (e.g., when evaluation data are gathered by internal reviewers, refugees may be reluctant to share unfavourable information for fear of upsetting the interviewer, being perceived as ungrateful, or being taken off benefits). When there is a high risk of external factors skewing the results, the M&E team should consider altering the design to mitigate these effects. For example, in the formative evaluation of the UK community sponsorship programme, sponsors were asked to initially inform refugees about the evaluation and seek their consent to share contact details with the researchers because the sponsors were deemed to be in a better position than the researchers to explain that participation was voluntary.[59]

While it is beyond the scope of this report to explore methodological considerations in an exhaustive and detailed manner, two aspects are particularly relevant to ensuring representativeness and mitigating potential biases: data collection tools and participant selection.

57 These domains are: markers and means (work, housing, education, health and social care, and leisure); social connections (bonds, bridges, and links); facilitators (language and communication, culture, digital skills, safety, and stability); and the foundation (rights and responsibilities).

58 At two points within the first 15 months after arrival, data are collected on resettled refugees with the help of local authorities and community sponsors. This includes information about English language acquisition (including class attendance and any barriers to attending); education; employment (economic status and time between arrival and employment); health (registration with a general practitioner, number of doctor visits, and self-reported health measures); social bridges and bonds (volunteering, participation in a group/club, and perceptions of local community cohesion); and secondary migration (movement from the first assigned accommodation). See Hough, *The UK Government's Approach to Evaluating*.

59 MPI Europe interview with Jenny Phillimore, Professor of Migration and Superdiversity, School of Social Policy, Sociology, and Criminology, University of Birmingham, 7 May 2019.

Data collection tools

Data can be collected via a mixture of qualitative methods (such as focus groups, interviews, and diaries) and quantitative methods (such as surveys). Quantitative data are better suited for ranking, categorising, or making generalisations, whereas qualitative methods can give deeper explanations, context, and interpretation to observed phenomena.

The authorities in charge should be able to justify why particular methods have been selected to collect data on certain indicators and to explain the intrinsic limitations of each approach.

When operationalising an M&E system, the authorities in charge should be able to justify why particular methods have been selected to collect data on certain indicators and to explain the intrinsic limitations of each approach. For each data collection exercise, M&E teams should also be aware that alternating between methods, such as switching between face-to-face and telephone interview, can create reliability issues within the data. For instance, in the longitudinal 'Building a New Life in Australia' project, researchers found that the same people responded differently to questions over the phone and in person, leading to inconsistencies in data comparisons over time.[60]

BOX 2
Resettled refugees as important stakeholders for the design of M&E data collection tools

Resettled refugees themselves are key stakeholders and potential contributors to M&E data collection systems, particularly where they volunteer their time to help shape the research design, participate in surveys, and agree to have their personal data collected and analysed. Collaboration between research teams and resettled refugees in designing an M&E plan can take many forms, including consulting with refugees through focus groups, preliminary interviews, or a steering committee to gather operational support in the design and implementation of data tools, and soliciting comments of draft analyses and reports.

An example of this collaborative approach comes from the United States, where the RISE survey on the integration of resettled refugees was conducted for the Colorado Refugee Services Program. The process of developing the survey included an advisory committee with members of the target populations: Bhutanese, Burmese, Iraqi, and Somali refugees. The advisory committee members had been in the United States for at least five years and spoke fluent English. This group provided critical research support, including pilot testing the survey before it was rolled out to ensure that it would be understood and completed as it was intended.

Source: Jini E Puma, Gary Lichtenstein, and Paul Stein, 'The RISE Survey: Developing and Implementing a Valid and Reliable Quantitative Measure of Refugee Integration in the United States', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 31, no. 4 (December 2018): 605–25.

60 National Centre for Longitudinal Data, *Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA): The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants* (Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2017).

Participant selection

A second important methodological question relates to sampling, and specifically the extent to which the people from whom data are collected are representative of the broader population of interest, whether resettled refugees or members of the host community. While certain types of data may be recorded for each incoming resettled refugee (e.g., age, gender, country of origin, settlement location within the host country), others may be recorded for only a subset of the refugee population, depending on the data collection systems within the host country and the relevant data protection laws (see Box 3). In the case of qualitative data, it is unlikely that monitoring teams will be able conduct in-depth interviews with all resettled refugees, or every implementing partner and community member. And even where it is possible (e.g., the resettlement programme is still in its infancy and the number of beneficiaries is limited), respondents can opt out of participating, once again leaving M&E teams with data for a subset of the total population.

BOX 3
Data protection and the 'do no harm' principle

Particularly when doing research on vulnerable populations, such as resettled refugees, data collection teams should integrate critical ethical considerations into the design of their methodology. M&E teams should make sure to include data protections and the guiding principle of 'do no harm' in their research protocols. This should include:

- gaining refugees' informed consent to participate in M&E;
- making counselling and support available to those who may need it;
- maintaining confidentiality (such as by making surveys anonymous and relying on data collectors who are not themselves part of the target refugee community); and
- conducting interviews in places where refugees will feel safe.

In Europe, to be compliant with strict EU data protection requirements, M&E teams may not be able to share or retain personal information about resettled refugees without their consent. It may therefore be necessary to develop processes that anonymise or limit access to particular pieces of data (e.g., details on health conditions).

M&E teams also need to weigh the value of gathering certain data against the level of intrusion that it will cause refugees (and whether, for instance, there may be other, less intrusive ways to gather information). For this reason, the Italian Resettlement Unit coordinates with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to gather all the information it needs for M&E in a single session in order to minimise disruptions. This process should also involve thinking about what refugees are getting out of surveys, and how much scope there is to resolve problems that are identified.

Sources: Comments by representatives of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe, Dublin, 15 October 2019; comments by representatives of the Italian Resettlement Unit, Ministry of the Interior, during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Rome, 12 March 2019; Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), 'Building a New Life in Australia' (news release, Australian Government, Melbourne, 2017); AIFS, 'Building a New Life in Australia' (news release, Australian Government, Melbourne, 2015); Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 'Sample Sizes and Response Rates for the Centre Studies', updated 30 January 2018.

Most M&E systems start with a sample for monitoring, with the size and composition of that sample dependent on the research or evaluation questions, the sampling technique, the size of the total (resettled refugee) population, the M&E budget, and the existence of institutional agreements with other government departments and statistical authorities. For example, the 'Building a New Life in Australia' project used the national settlement database to identify members of their target population, newly arrived refugees. The research team then contacted almost 2,800 families, before hitting their target sample size of 1,500.[61] In some other cases, M&E teams decide to specifically sample resettled refugees (or members of host communities) who face difficulties in order to achieve a more in-depth understanding of their challenges, allow resettlement actors to assist them, and ultimately to adapt the programme to address structural issues. But if the sampling method is not clearly stated and the analysis of the data does not integrate these methodological considerations, there is a risk that the findings of these evaluations may be misunderstood by nonspecialists.

Monitoring teams may also decide to target participants based on their availability. For instance, resettled refugees with a certain profile (e.g., those who are technology savvy) may be easier to stay in touch with, or M&E teams may opt to survey people living closer to urban centres. This may allow data collectors to reach out to more resettled refugees and to save time and resources, but this sampling method can skew the results. Resettled refugees from one community may differ significantly from those who belong to another in terms of employment, education, host-country language skills, and the existence of social networks within the new country.

Step 6. Gathering the data to measure progress on indicators

Once the foundation of the M&E framework is set, all of the actors involved in the resettlement system should lift the hood on their existing data collection processes to evaluate the extent to which these tools can be used to measure progress on indicators and where adjustment and new processes are needed. Developing an M&E framework with a mixture of realistic short-term indicators and more aspirational longer-term measures may allow for a modest start, while building in the flexibility to scale M&E operations up if and when more resources become available.

Review existing data collection processes

Even without a formal M&E framework, resettlement authorities and their partners are de facto collecting—and could tap into—lots of relevant information, such as demographic, administrative, financial, and reporting data (see Box 4). In designing and implementing M&E frameworks, resettlement teams and their M&E partners should first map out what data processes already exist and commit to accessing, gathering, and analysing this information in a more systematic way. In Italy, for example, the EU-FRANK pilot found that the civil-society organisations within the humanitarian corridors programme had limited awareness of each other's data collection tools, processes, and findings. These partners were pleased to discover that much of

61 The team initially reached out to 2,769 'migrating units', as named on their visa applications. A unit can be made of a single person or several members of a family. See Pilar Rioseco, John De Maio, and Cuc Hoang, 'The Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA) Dataset: A Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants in Australia', *The Australian Economic Review* 50, no. 3 (2017): 356–62; AIFS, *Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants - Wave 1 Data Users Guide* (Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2015).

the information needed to calculate the indicators they wanted to track was already being collected, and that they only needed to improve their data-sharing.[62]

BOX 4
Potential data sources for a resettlement M&E framework

In designing an M&E framework and generating data on the selected indicators, research teams should consider the following data sources:

- policy documents (e.g., official announcements of quotas to be resettled, target geographic locations for countries of origin or first asylum);
- administrative data (e.g., UNHCR Resettlement Registration Forms, resettlement authority databases, data collected at reception centres or by implementing partners);
- financial data (e.g., reporting from the resettlement authority and implementing partners);
- census data and statistical reporting (e.g., demographics, quantitative data);
- surveys and questionnaires (e.g., self-reporting, qualitative data); and
- media reports (e.g., stories about refugees' integration or interactions with their new communities).

Tailor existing processes to meet identified needs

The next step is to adapt existing data collection processes to gather information on the agreed indicators, where this is not already being done. This should include consideration of how processes can be streamlined, including through the use of technology, in order to cut down on the administrative burden of monitoring—and the demands on refugees and others from whom data are being collected. For example, in Italy social workers fill out an exit form for resettled refugees when they leave SIPROIMI facilities at the end of the reception period. Resettlement partners are still debating whether this tool could be an opportunity to collect additional data with limited effort.[63] Other ways to tailor data collection processes to serve an M&E function without creating additional work for resettlement actors could involve adapting existing monitoring templates instead of designing entirely new ones. Still, some organisations may be reluctant to change their systems, especially if they are not contractually obliged to do so, and revisiting contractual arrangements may be necessary to make new reporting requirements clear.

Develop new data processes and look for synergies

For some indicators, M&E teams will have to start from scratch. They may need to develop new tools (such as surveys, questionnaires, databases, or reporting templates) or new processes (such as monitoring visits and organising tests to assess specific progress). This is especially likely to be the case for indicators related to resettled refugees' perspectives on their new lives and to host-community perceptions of refugees, which typically require more in-depth data collection processes than are part of existing demographic or

62 MPI Europe interview with Manuela De Marco, Immigration Office, Caritas Italiana, 21 August 2019.
63 Comments by representatives of the Italian Resettlement Unit, Italian Ministry of the Interior, during the workshop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Resettlement, organised by MPI Europe, Rome, 12 March 2019.

administrative sources, for example. New tools demand a solid investment in their design and testing to ensure they generate the right data and avoid confusion, delay, or partial records.

The development of new tools is an opportunity for resettlement actors—within or across countries—to work together to create economies of scale. For instance, in Italy the organisations involved in the country's humanitarian corridors could pool their resources to develop new tools based on the common objectives and indicators they identified during the EU-FRANK pilot project. As more resettlement countries start or expand their M&E efforts, EU institutions such as EASO or international organisations such as UNHCR could facilitate transnational synergies. These institutions could also support capacity-building for resettlement teams, with the help of M&E experts and researchers.

The development of new tools is an opportunity for resettlement actors—within or across countries—to work together to create economies of scale.

Another natural source of synergy could be partnerships with academic or research institutions. Rather than reinventing the wheel, resettlement actors can sometimes tap into and contribute to the body of research on resettlement and private sponsorship by universities and research centres. For example, in Italy, the University of Notre Dame is conducting a five-year qualitative study into the experiences and outcomes of refugees who enter through the humanitarian corridors programme.[64] While this research focuses on only two of the three humanitarian corridors civil-society organisations, it is expected to generate insights that are relevant for all three, as well as for the national resettlement authorities.

Ultimately, governments may not be able to gather all of the information they desire on refugee resettlement, and it is possible that some indicators cannot be acted upon in the short term. For example, the secondary movement of resettled refugees (i.e., away from the locality they were assigned to settle in) is a phenomenon that concerns many resettlement states. But while it may be possible to capture such movements within a single country (e.g., Canada),[65] movement across countries in Europe may be less easy to track. Some indicators will remain aspirational for now, and M&E teams may only be able to turn to them at a later stage, once they have established reliable systems for gathering and analysing data on the 'easier' ones.

5 Final Considerations and Recommendations

Over the last decade, more countries have piloted, established, or scaled up resettlement programmes to respond to unprecedented levels of human displacement worldwide.[66] Most of this expansion has taken place in the European Union, largely driven by the Member States' agreement in 2017 to a two-year EU resettlement and humanitarian admission plan.[67] Since then, more than 40 per cent of all refugees resettled have come to Europe, and the continent has emerged as a centre for innovation in resettlement

64 Kellogg Institute for International Studies, 'Humanitarian Corridor Initiative', accessed 6 May 2020.
65 IRCC, Evaluation Division, *Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)* (Ottawa: IRCC, 2016).
66 UNHCR, 'Trends at a Glance', accessed 25 May 2020.
67 European Parliament, 'Legislative Train Schedule: JD-EU Resettlement Framework', updated 26 April 2020.

programmes.[68] As the next chapter of European resettlement begins with the new EU leadership, there is a growing appetite for tools that can help resettlement authorities take stock of the lessons learnt. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to disrupt this progress, with global lockdowns pausing arrivals and pushing agreed quotas off track.

This is thus a critical moment to examine the added value that monitoring and evaluation can bring to resettlement programmes. M&E systems can help track whether programmes are achieving their policy objectives, both those listed in official policy documents and the more implicit expectations of the diversity of actors involved in resettlement systems. Such assessments hold the potential to capture the value of resettlement programmes not only for refugees but also for host communities, countries of first asylum, and international relations more broadly. The evidence produced is also an important tool for efforts to improve programme design and implementation, ensure that each phase of the programme is performing as effectively and efficiently as possible, and understand the effects of one phase on the next. This ongoing learning should help national resettlement programmes become more sustainable and grow, and potentially support the creation of new programmes in other countries. Finally, M&E can allow programmes to gather stories about what happens to refugees and host communities after resettlement that, if paired with effective communication strategies, can help secure public and political support for future resettlement.

Now is the time to capitalise on this momentum and to ensure that resettlement states have the guidance and operational support to get their M&E frameworks off the ground.

In Europe, support for resettlement M&E has been spurred by both internal and external catalysts. As new pilot pathways to protection are created, there is a hunger to understand how they are performing and how they might be improved. At the same time, initiatives such as the EU-FRANK project are creating opportunities for resettlement authorities to exchange and build a community of practice.[69] Now is the time to capitalise on this momentum and to ensure that resettlement states have the guidance and operational support to get their M&E frameworks off the ground. But in order to do so, it is essential to break this process down into manageable parts, solicit buy-in from key stakeholders, build off of existing tools, and set realistic expectations about what a resettlement M&E system can achieve and how the information produced can be used. To do this, resettlement authorities should consider the following:

- **Find an M&E 'champion'.** Rather than developing organically, M&E frameworks usually require trusted and authoritative leadership to drive the process. These leaders are able to build bridges between important stakeholders and generate interest in M&E. Progress in one country may have a positive ripple effect elsewhere as champions become inspired by M&E activities in other resettlement states, such as during EU and international meetings (e.g., UNHCR's Annual Tripartite Consultation on Migration) or in workshops and trainings for resettlement officials.[70]

68 Susan Fratzke and Hanne Beirens, 'The Future of Refugee Resettlement: Made in Europe?' (commentary, MPI, Washington DC, February 2020).

69 Fratzke and Beirens, 'The Future of Refugee Resettlement'.

70 For example, in 2020, EU-FRANK, the European Asylum Support Office, and MPI Europe launched a four-part workshop series on M&E for resettlement authorities across Europe.

- **Agree on clear objectives for the resettlement programme, at both the strategic and operational levels.** Resettlement programmes—whether they are new or well established—should have clearly defined strategic objectives, as well as a set of goals for every phase of the operational process. Bringing the stakeholders involved in this process together to examine and prioritise between objectives is a valuable exercise in thinking through a programme's logic and a key part of determining what is most important to monitor and assess. This process can also help promote goodwill among actors as they reaffirm their shared objectives and discuss those that differ.

- **Set clear objectives for the M&E framework.** From the early stages of the monitoring exercise, it is crucial to consider who the audiences are for the information and analyses it will produce. This will help ensure that the data being collected are fit for purpose. For example, if an objective of the M&E framework is to identify which types of predeparture orientation best prepare refugees for life after they arrive in a new country, it will be essential to define how long after arrival data should be collected and how this information will be fed back to orientation trainers and course designers.

- **Start where you are, but with an eye on opportunities to grow.** Even the most effective M&E system is unlikely to capture all of the potential data points that interested beneficiaries, community members, and implementing bodies may wish for. Resettlement actors must prioritise particular dimensions (and related indicators) based on their relevance to programme and M&E objectives, and on the institutional capacity to collect data on them. By thinking through which indicators would be useful to monitor under both ideal and realistic conditions, resettlement actors can prepare themselves to scale up their M&E frameworks should more resources become available either internally or through partnerships with external actors, such as universities and research institutes.

  As countries set out to collect data on their chosen indicators, it is important to note that resettlement authorities and their partners already have significant amounts of information on programme performance and impact. It often sits in paper files or in the minds of staff, but a bit of creativity and smart use of technology can enable an M&E team to tap into this existing data, maximise its value, and systematically feed it into decision-making processes.

- **Develop economies of scale.** Resettlement states, in collaboration with international organisations such as UNHCR and EASO, as well as research institutes and experts, can work together to lower the entry barriers for states that want to set up an M&E framework. In addition, it may be possible and beneficial to share lists of indicators in order to make programmes more comparable and, ultimately, identify best practices that could be replicated across states. International organisations could also act as a clearinghouse for data collection tools, for instance providing sample surveys that countries could use to gather data from resettled refugees and implementing partners. Universities have also produced considerable research about resettled refugees, and strengthening the linkages between them and national resettlement units would encourage the integration of their findings into policy-making.

Although it holds the potential to create a sound evidence base to support the improvement of resettlement programmes and contribute to their sustainability, M&E is not a silver bullet. Once problems and mitigation measures are identified, the scope—or impetus—for resettlement actors to apply them may be limited. Conducting M&E does not guarantee that recommendations will be immediately adopted, with many other political and structural factors at play. Still, without solid data to back up recommendations, the likelihood of pressing issues being addressed is even more remote.

With new ambitious goals under the UNHCR three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways (2019–21),[71] there is a critical need to document whether and how resettlement offers an effective and sustainable solution for refugees, to assess its impact on societies more broadly, and to measure its effects compared to other durable solutions. But while lots of learning has taken place in recent years, it is rarely captured and analysed systematically. With more innovation and experimentation in this space than ever before, including in the creation of new protection pathways such as community-based sponsorship, it is more important than ever to ensure that resettlement programmes are delivering on their objectives and being held accountable to both their beneficiaries and the broader public. Support for refugee resettlement programmes cannot be taken for granted, and resettlement authorities must prepare today for the questions that could be asked tomorrow.

It is more important than ever to ensure that resettlement programmes are delivering on their objectives and being held accountable to both their beneficiaries and the broader public.

71 UNHCR, *The Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021)*.

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